
OBITUARY FOR TERRY CROWLEY

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The sudden and unexpected death in January 2005 of Professor Terry Crowley represents a huge loss for the fields of Oceanic linguistics and Pacific Creole Studies, as well as for his many friends and colleagues around the world.

His contribution to these fields has been without equal, and he will be greatly missed not only for the productivity and quality of his research, but also for the help, encouragement and support he willingly gave to colleagues and students. The peoples among whom he worked will miss him both personally and for the materials, especially in the form of edited texts, which he made accessible for them as part of his work on their languages.

Terry knew he wanted to be a linguist while still at school, and famously wrote to Stephen Wurm at ANU asking how to go about attaining a PhD in the subject. Following his advice, he enrolled at ANU in 1971 and graduated with BA (Hons I) in Asian Studies and Linguistics in 1974. In 1975-6 he was employed in the Department as a Research Assistant to Prof. R. M. W. Dixon, doing both field work and library-based research on Australian Languages.

His PhD project, a description of the language of Paama in Vanuatu, was his entry into Oceanic linguistics, a field to which the rest of his academic life was devoted. When he completed his doctorate in 1980, he had already been lecturing at the University of Papua-New Guinea for a year, and remained there for a further three years. Some of the materials he prepared for distance education during this period, formed the basis for his highly regarded and very popular *Introduction to Historical Linguistics* (1st edition, UPNG 1987, 3rd edition OUP 1997). While there he published his material on Paamese and

continued to publish on Australian languages.

From 1983 to 1990, Terry was Director of the Languages Unit, at the Port Vila campus of the University of the South Pacific. Among the duties of this position was the provision of distance teaching for students of USP spread over the whole range of its catchment area, which led among other materials to the production of a grammar of Bislama written in Bislama. Throughout this period, Terry's research into both Melanesian pidgins and indigenous languages of Vanuatu developed further, and these areas were to remain his main research interest for the rest of his life.

In 1991 he was appointed Senior Lecturer in the Linguistics Programme at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, NZ, and was promoted to Professor in 2003. Throughout this period he carried a very full teaching load, universally respected and liked by his students, and producing exemplary supporting materials for his courses. In 1997, the Programme was expanded to be the Dept of General and Applied Linguistics, incorporating the University's offerings in Applied Linguistics, previously accommodated in the Language Institute, and a range of courses in English as a Second Language. Terry played a full role in the administration of this unit, dutifully, efficiently, though not enthusiastically, taking his turn as Head of Dept. At the same time, his work with Vanuatu languages intensified, despite the greater distance from the field, and between 1990 and his death Terry conducted fieldwork in no fewer than ten Vanuatu languages. On all of these, there are descriptions either already in print or on the verge of publication. At the same time, he produced a definitive dictionary and grammar for Bislama. Over the last two years, his research into the endangered languages of Malakula was supported by grants from the Endangered Languages Fund, and the Marsden Research Fund.

Space precludes mentioning all the invitations Terry received to participate in conferences, teach courses as guest lecturer, act as consultant for governments, and language planning groups of all kinds. Let three recent instances serve as examples: from 1994 on, Terry was involved on an ongoing basis with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in Hobart in the development of a language programme in the context of the extinction of the Tasmanian languages in 1876; since 2002, he was involved with the Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centres Association in assisting in the translation into Bislama of training materials relating to legal and human rights, as well as in training Bislama speakers to translate the Vanuatu Penal Code and the Police Act into Bislama; and in November and December 1999, he carried out a World Bank consultancy with the Ministry of Education, Vanuatu, on pilot projects in

vernacular literacy for Vanuatu, which is the world's most linguistically diverse nation. A substantial report entitled *Vernacular literacy in Vanuatu* (110 pp.) was submitted January 1999.

Tributes from all over the world have arrived in Hamilton, as news of Terry's death spread. He was farewelled at a memorial function at the University of Waikato Chapel, which was attended by large numbers of present colleagues at Waikato, and by family, friends and colleagues from all over the country as well as Australia and Vanuatu.

Haere atu rā, e te hoa. E kore rawa e mutu te tangi ki a koe.

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